



# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

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## Governor Signs Bill Restricting Cell Phones in Work Zones

**Madison, WI...** Today, Governor Scott Walker signed a bill authored by Senator Jerry Petrowski (*R-Marathon*) and Representative John Spiros (*R-Marshfield*) aimed at improving the safety of the traveling public and those working in highway construction, maintenance, or utility work zones.

Assembly Bill 198 bans the use of handheld cell phones in highway maintenance or construction areas, or utility work areas, where workers are present and at risk from traffic. The bill was requested by local county highway commissioners, many of whom have seen firsthand the dangers posed by distracted motorists in work zones, including the deaths of three county workers in 2015.

“While we have enacted bans on texting while driving, and the use of a cell phone by probationary drivers, I believe there is more we can do to ensure the safety of our roadways, both for those who work and those who travel on them. Many other states have banned this dangerous behavior, and I’m pleased that Wisconsin is taking a step in the right direction,” said Senator Petrowski.

Information from the AAA Foundation indicates that more than half of all drivers admit to using a cellphone while driving at least occasionally, despite the fact that many studies have shown that doing so is associated with roughly a quadrupling of the crash risk. In addition, crash statistics from the Department of Transportation indicate that, from 2009 to 2014, there have been 54 fatalities in Wisconsin construction zones over that period. On average, over 1,700 crashes occur in construction zones statewide every year.

The bill makes an exception for drivers using a voice-operated or hands-free device, and allows the use of handheld phones to report an emergency. The bill imposes penalties up to \$50 for first offenses and \$100 for multiple offenses of using a cell phone in a construction zone.

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